



## **Blue Dog Blueprint for Fiscal Reform: Balanced Budget Amendment**

### **Paying our debts, protecting our future**

*The idea is simple. American families have to live on a budget. The federal government should be held to the same commonsense standard.*

#### A Constitutional Amendment to Balance the Budget:

Our underlying structural deficits are the biggest threat to our economic security today. Just like American families who make tough decisions every day, Congress must learn to live within its means. We have a responsibility to future generations of Americans to put a plan in place now to begin reducing the deficit, balance the budget and lay the groundwork for sound fiscal policies over the long term.

Talking about paying down the debt and balancing the budget is easy. It's where the rubber meets the road that Congress has fallen short. This is why the Blue Dogs, as part of the *Blue Dog Blueprint for Fiscal Reform*, have developed legislation that takes a realistic approach to balancing the budget by 2020.

The Blue Dog "Balanced Budget Amendment," introduced by Representative Bobby Bright of Alabama, calls for a Constitutional amendment that would require Congress to pass a balanced budget for the federal government each year.

The Blue Dog Balanced Budget Amendment would:

- Require Congress to produce a balanced budget every fiscal year.
- Require the President to submit a balanced budget in his or her annual transmission to Congress.
- Prohibit outlays for a fiscal year from exceeding total receipts for that fiscal year unless Congress, by a three-fifths roll call vote of each House, authorizes a specific excess of outlays over receipts.



The Blue Dog Balanced Budget Amendment would also:

- Provide seven years for three-fourths of the states to ratify the constitutional amendment.
- Protect Social Security benefits, ensuring that our most vulnerable are not subject to a reduction in their guaranteed benefits when they need them the most.

Balancing the budget is an attainable goal. From 1998-2001, our country achieved balanced budgets through adherence to PAYGO, limits on discretionary spending, sensible tax policies and investments in smart, pro-growth policies. Forty-nine states currently require an annual balanced budget, and an amendment to the Constitution will finally hold the federal government to the same, commonsense standard.

Furthermore, if we do not take action now, we will continue to short-change future generations who will face higher taxes and cuts to federal investments in priorities such as education, health care and national security.

Restoring fiscal discipline to our federal government is not going to be easy, and success will require members on both sides of the aisle to rise above partisan politics and put forth their best ideas. The Blue Dogs have a history of working with members of both parties to advance commonsense policies, and we have put forth the Balanced Budget Amendment in that same spirit of bipartisanship.